186, 728, 648, 668

Syria	MD1
Israel	MF1
Jordan	MG1
Iraq	MH1
Lebanon	ME1

/For an account of the formation and growth of the Arab Succession States after World War I, the Arab Nationalist Movement, relations between the Arab countries and the great Powers, see 66: Bonné, M1 Middle East, category 116, pp. 77-87./

Syria and Lebanon!!

S 647 ...ria and he has obvious affinities with General Neguib of Egypt whom he visited later in the year.

The threat of Zionism is considered very real in Syria and Shishakli has declared that Syria has not given up hope of a revision of the present position. Between March and May 1951, a flare-up over Lake Huleh brought an offer of Iraqi aid to Syria, but hostilities between Syria and Israel were localized and stilled without leading to a general outbreak of war. All Syrians wish Israel ill; fear of Israeli expansion remains and is fostered by the Government.

S 185 186 In internal politics, the most progressive measures which have yet been considered are land reform and the partition of state lands. There is little unrest among the people, who generally want to live their lives without undue government interference. Nationalism of two kinds exists: a narrow patriotism that has for the first time the support of the rulers, and a narrow xenophobia that, while less extreme than in Egypt, is more pronounced in Syria than in Lebanon.

(ii) Lebanon

L 642 646 643 Lebanon is a republic of which the Chamber of Deputies was till 1953 elected by direct manhood suffrage but in that year women were permitted to vote in the election. By convention, the President of the Republic must be a Christian and is normally a Maronite, the Prime Minister must be a Sunni Muslim and the President of the Chamber a Shii Muslim. The table on p. 466 above shows the division of parliamentary seats between the religious sects; a scrupulous observance of these quotas is evident even in the civil service establishments. The existence of a Christian majority is held to be essential for the survival of Lebanon as a separate state and so, in June 1950, it was found convenient to extend the franchise to Lebanese abroad (of whom the majority are Christian) and to increase the number of deputies from 55 to 77, but in November 1951, under a new electoral law, the number was reduced to 44. The Muslim rate of natural increase is higher than that of the Christians and it is probably for this reason that no census has been taken since. In other ways the constitution and administration are similar to those of Syria already described.

L 645 647 *Internal Politics*

As in Syria, a European type of political party system has not yet evolved and the struggle has been not only between different cliques of ruling families backed by great commercial wealth, but also between these rich groups on the one hand and

Royal Institute of International Affairs [no date] [1954 ?] MIDDLE EAST
LEBANON NEI

those who claim to speak for the people on the other. The chief parties are the Constitutional Bloc, Nationalist Bloc, Progressive Socialist Party, Syrian People's Party, and the Phalangists.

When the Constitutional Bloc came into office in 1943 it aimed at independence from France but accepted the possibility of a treaty. Of the leaders of the party, Bishara al-Khouri took office as President of the Republic, ostensibly becoming a political neutral in 1947, and Riyad as-Sulh, who had been an associate of Jamil Mardam Bey, became Prime Minister. On 25 May 1947 elections were held which were reported to have reached a new nadir of corruption and the return to power of as-Sulh was bitterly but quite ineffectively opposed by those he had defeated. The alliance between Premier and President, neither of whom could constitutionally aim at the other's office, was further reinforced by the granting of an extension of term to the latter in 1948. The wealthy families—such as the Uwainis, Khouris, Aridas, and Kettanehs—were the powers behind the Constitutional Bloc's rule from 1943 to 1951 and their common interest opposed the boundaries of sectarian conflict.

But the leader of the Nationalist Bloc, Camille Chamoun, and Kemal Jumblatt of the Progressive Socialist Party continued to oppose the results of the 1947 poll. One of the other opposition parties, the Syrian People's Party, was authoritarian and aimed at union with Syria; in June 1949 this party was proscribed in Lebanon and in July its bands attacked gendarmerie posts but the attempt at a coup failed and the leader, Antoun Saadeh, took refuge in Syria. Contrary to normal Arab practice, Marshal Zaim handed Saadeh back to the Lebanese, who shot him. The Sulh Government also took measures to restrain the Phalangists, a Catholic body whose aims were the opposite of those of the Syrian People's Party but whose organization and methods also tended towards the glorification of a personal leader. Internal security was also a problem, and bandits operated in the Biqaa until they were finally cleared out by Irish gendarmerie action. As 1949 ended, public opinion was beginning to sympathize with Chamoun's press attacks on the Government. In March 1950 some of the Syrian People's Party failed in an attempt to kill Riyad as-Sulh, whose troubles were further increased by a dispute with the President over a matter of patronage, because of which the as-Sulh Cabinet resigned on 15 February 1951. In July 1951 Riyad as-Sulh was assassinated while on a visit to Amman.

Hussein al-Uweini took the premiership as a 'caretaker' until such time as elections could be held; by these, in April 1951, the Constitutional Bloc again achieved a majority, but the elections

Royal Institute of International Affairs 0-4 (no date) 954 M2 MIDDLE EAST
LEBANON M51

665 668 had been fairer than in 1947 and the Opposition had gained more seats. Abdullah al-Yafi became Premier in June 1951 and remained in office until his place was taken by another Constitutionalist, Sami as-Sulh, in February 1952. Opposition to government by this party was still growing, and it is perhaps surprising that no more effective resistance had been made before. In August 1952 the followers of Jumblat and of Chamoun held a meeting at which the Government was attacked, and, although they had only a few seats in Parliament, they gained widespread popular support. The opponents of the President were not confined to the Opposition, for not long afterwards Sami as-Sulh made a speech attacking him and his family; as-Sulh then resigned and the ministries were taken over and administered by civil servants. On 15 September the Opposition parties called a general strike and succeeded, with the aid of the chief of the armed forces, General Fuad Shihab, in bringing about the resignation of the President. General Shihab assumed interim powers as Prime Minister but he refused the presidency and, when the Chamber elected Camille Chamoun to be President, the General resigned to fulfil his pledge that the army would not interfere in politics. The new President found it hard to choose a Muslim Prime Minister who would enjoy the support of the Socialist Party and thus at the end of September turned to Khaled Shihab, who had no political affiliations, and requested him to form a Government.

Shihab resigned on 28 April 1953 and was replaced by Sa'eb Salem but at the end of May President Chamoun dissolved Parliament. Elections were held in July under a new electoral law (promulgated by the President in the autumn of 1952), which reduced the number of deputies from 77 to 44, gave the franchise to women subject to certain educational qualifications, and made voting compulsory for men. Kemal Jumblat's Socialist Party won 20 seats and the Constitutional Bloc remained the strongest group, but no less than 12 independent deputies were returned. A new government was formed on 18 August by Abdullah al-Yafi, who himself became Minister of the Interior, of Defence and of Information, as well as Prime Minister. The other ministers, members of the Chamber of Deputies, had played no part in Lebanese political life during the previous twelve months.

External Problems and Relationships

648 Lebanon's attachment to the Western Powers as opposed to Russia is far more assured than that of Syria. The history of the Christians of Mount Lebanon leads them to seek close ties with

of the minority problem contained in it was satisfactory. When the Treaty was ratified, it would firmly establish on a contractual basis a French influence which the too-long maintenance of an authoritarian régime might in the long run compromise.

3

In Lebanon the signature of the Franco-Lebanese Treaty was welcomed by the Maronites and some other sections of the population. The Sunnis, however, regarded it as a blow to their aim of reunion with Syria; their anger found expression in communal clashes in Beirut and elsewhere at the end of 1936. In spite of their opposition, however, steps were immediately taken to carry out the policy of the Treaty by re-establishing self-governing institutions. The Constitution of 1926 was restored in January, 1937; the Chamber met, and Khair ad-Din al-Ahdab, a Sunni, formed a Ministry. But it soon became apparent that the signature of the Treaty and the revival of constitutional forms had not affected the essential nature of Lebanese political life, which continued to be dominated by sectarian issues.

A new electoral law was passed in 1937, replacing the existing Chamber by a new and larger one, two-thirds elected on a sectarian basis and one-third nominated. The elections of November, 1937, were marked by corruption on an extensive scale; and the Chamber which resulted from them, and which remained in being until 1939, was remarkable only for the bitterness and complexity of its internal dissensions. The Ministries of the Amir Khalid Shihab and Abdullah al-Yafi succeeded those of Khair ad-Din al-Ahdab, and none of them had any notable legislative or other advance to show.

The consequence of this was a general loss of interest and faith in the constitutional system as it existed in Lebanon. It was not simply that the established leaders and the parliamentary parties, the Unionists, Constitutionalists and so on, ceased to possess even so limited a hold over public opinion as they had perhaps had; more than that, Lebanese began to ask themselves what purpose was served by the existence of a costly Parliament, filled with landowners and lawyers, wasting its time in interminable quarrels and showing no effective interest in the country's welfare. Had not Lebanon been better ruled under the simple system which had existed